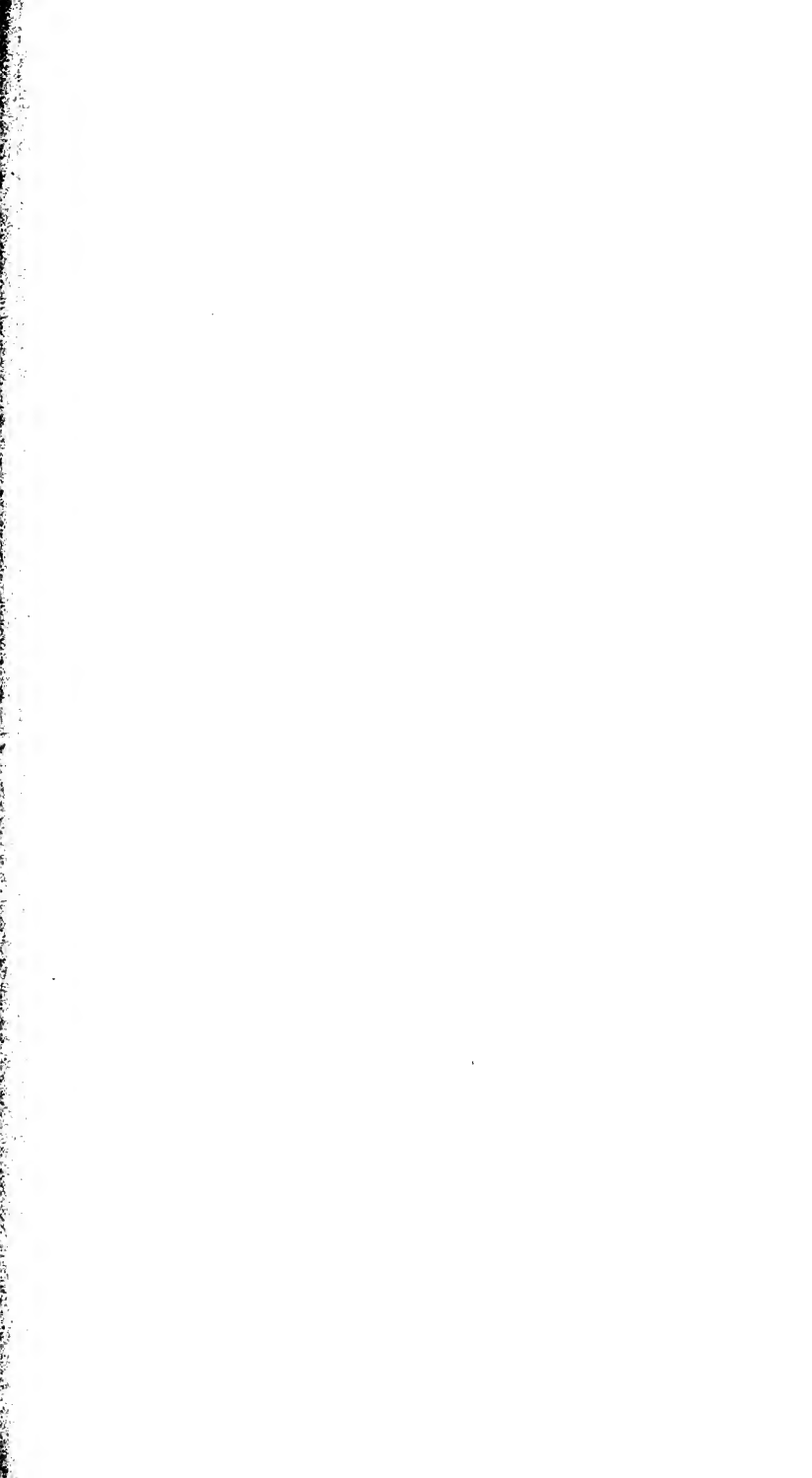


An
Oration Delivered
by
Humphrey Moore
Milford, N.H.
March 9, 1815

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AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED AT MILFORD, N. H.

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MARCH 9, 1815,



OCCASIONED BY THE

TREATY OF PEACE,

MADE AND RATIFIED,

BETWEEN

GREAT-BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

BY HUMPHREY MOORE,
PASTOR.

AMHERST.....R. BOYLSTON, PRINTER:

...
1815,

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ORATION.

IT is a custom of date immemorial to celebrate great and interesting events. The mind loves to recognize dangers, which have been escaped, and scenes, which afforded enjoyment. A recollection of disasters teaches the necessity of avoiding them ; and a recollection of blessings teaches the duty and good policy of preserving them. When events of public interest occur, it is suitable to give them public notice. We love to rejoice with those who rejoice ; and a reciprocity of feeling heightens our enjoyment. Human beings never appear to greater advantage than they do when they approach the altar, and make a humble offering of gratitude to Him, who notices their condition ; delivers them from calamities ; and grants them his richest blessings. However different is the structure of the human system, however different is the disposition of the human mind, however different is the interest of individuals, there are certain points, with which the disposition and sentiment of a whole social body come in contact. There are certain notes which all can sound. There are certain strings in the human system which are formed and tuned alike ; and they vibrate in unison. It is judicious to select those events for celebration, in which there is sameness

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of interest, of sentiment, sameness of feeling. Such a concurrence, like the power of attraction, tends to unite the body politic. The celebration of the birth day of our national sovereignty, if it has excited our pride by the recollection of the heroism of our fathers, has directed all voices, all sentiments, all hearts to one point, the preservation of national independence.

It is our business, at the present time, to celebrate the return of peace. Spirit of delusion, break the iron scales from the eyes of thy subjects ; spirit of darkness, who obscurest the vision of the human mind, stand back ; while we disclose a few naked truths, and make a few suggestions dictated by *common sense*. We would not obscure the joys of this day by tracing the rise and progress of the late war ; neither would we weigh its causes and its expediency. HE, who holds an equal balance, knows what is the guilt of its cause ; and he has set to its account the blood of thousands. If the horrors of war have ceased, its effects are yet seen and felt. Where is that son, on whom his parents leaned to support their declining years ? Where is that husband, that father, on whom his family depended for their daily bread ? The tears of parents, of wives, of children, give painful evidence of the sad effects of war. Why do we look into the catalogue of woe and call up the tenderest sensibilities ? It is a day of joy. It is a day of joy because no more have fallen in the day of battle ; because no greater ravages have been made ; because the sluices of human blood are closed ; because the batteries and the port holes of death are turned from us.

Though the late war had no immediate bearing upon the character of the peace ; yet it would be injustice to our national character to pass unnoticed the repeated instances of heroism which were displayed in the late conflict. Even on foreign ground, where means of subsistence were small ;

where munitions of war were few ; and where there was no distinct object to contend for, the American genius often burst through every impediment ; surmounted every obstacle and gained glory where it gained nothing else. The wilds of the North more than once acknowledged our military prowess ; and the waters on the line, vibrating with equal motion for a time, were compelled to acknowledge our superior naval skill and heroism. While Erie and Champlain roll their waves, the names of the heroes of these lakes will live in grateful remembrance.

The finger of Providence directed us to seek redress where we had suffered injury ; to plant a naval force on the high seas to protect our struggling commerce ; in due time to vindicate our rights ; and the smiles of Heaven upon our naval enterprise during the late contest, affords favorable evidence that our cause was not entirely groundless. The Atlantic, having washed such an extent of coast of *free* soil, seemed to be partial to the *free* sons of America. The small forces, which have been fitted out to annoy the enemy and to afflict his commerce, have given pleasing proof of our naval skill and bravery ; and shew what great and happy effects might be produced, if our resources were proportionately appropriated to the support and protection of commerce. If we, in comparison with Great-Britain, are in an infantile state ; if we cannot cope with her on her own element, she discovers in us the bone, the muscle and the spirit, the enterprize, which indicates approaching manhood ; and she knows that we only need an administration, who will wisely direct our resources and our strength to make her feel jealous of our growth,

When the late contest passed from an *offensive* to a *defensive* war, it changed its appearance and its character. When Great-Britain saw that our efforts at invasion were feeble, ill directed, and not calculated to obtain the contemplated

object, she saw fit to retaliate by the example we had set. When she invaded these shores, sacred to civil liberty and christianity, a shock, sudden as that of electricity, moved every American, roused their drowsy energies ; united their hearts ; their voices and their operations. The spirit of America, long expelled from this country, returned with all her beauty and with all her fire. She warmed every heart ; nerved every arm ; and gave martial vigor to every breast ; Men and money were not wanting to defend our property ; our families, and our altars. Our soldiery needed but the signal and they were ready to march to repel the invader. At almost every point, where the enemy trod on American ground, they found a spirit bold and firm as the shores they invaded, save in Columbia's District, where political breath had charged the air with noxious vapour, weakened every arm, unstrung every soul ; and, and, for our country's sake, for our national honor, hold, conceal the truth. *Let that day be solitary ; let no joyful voice come therein.*

A few brave exploits or a few unfortunate events do not give character to a war. War derives its character from its *general* management and from its result. The general management of the war is too well known to need to be repeated, but its *result* demands notice and comment. The object of the war (if we may believe its authors) was to compel England to rescind her Orders in Council ; to restore to us our impressed seamen ; to prevent her future impressments ; to compel her to acknowledge the principle, that the American flag should protect the crew ; and to effectuate these purposes, it was designed to slip Canada this side the line, in a few short months. This was considered a masterpiece of policy, which would soon place America where she ought to be. The measure was correct, bold, would, *must* command success. About the time war was declared, the obnoxious orders were rescinded ; and intelligence of the transaction was soon after communicated to our government. But other points of diffi-

culty still remained ; and the war must be pushed till these were also removed. It was said, and repeatedly said, that this nation could no longer be free and independent; if we submitted to these infringements ; and that the administration ought to be *despised* if they made peace without obtaining their object. Is the object obtained ? Is the cause of the war removed ? The President informs us that “ the causes for the war have ceased to operate.” By this he would have us understand that the war has removed those causes. But Mr. President, where are your thousands of native seamen, who were impressed by British force ; kept for years in captivity ; and for whom you and your disciples expressed the tenderest anxiety ? Was it not as much cause of war to restore those unfortunate captives, as to secure others from falling into the same condition ? But *why* have the causes for the war ceased to operate ? Why does not Britain impress our seamen ? For this plain reason, we probably have not a merchantman afloat on the seas. The first vessel, which floats from our ports, will be as subject to be distressed by impressment as any vessel that ever sailed from our harbors. If the present condition of Europe does not tempt England to make impressments, it is foreign causes, not our puny war, which remove the evil. The American war had no bearing upon the present state of the European powers ; and if *their* present state has removed the causes of the late war, it would have removed them as well *without* as *with* the war. If collision of interests should again take place in Europe, and it often does, England will have the same temptation to renew her orders and impressments, which she always had ; and she will undoubtedly exercise her claims with her usual freedom. How then can the war be said to be “ highly honorable to the nation and signalized by the most brilliant success” ?* A man who speaks of the honors

* President's Message

and success of the late war, may say *any* thing with equal ease and pertinence, provided it answers his purpose.

The declaration of peace has proved what was the general sentiment of the late war. However enthusiastic were the authors and abettors of hostilities at their commencement, they soon found that offensive war *hung back*. When the sound of peace reached our ears, little or no inquiry was made what were its conditions. No one was heard to ask, "are our impressed seamen restored ; are sailors' rights and free trade secured ?" It seemed to give universal satisfaction that the horrors of war had ceased and peace was restored. This interesting event swallowed up all other considerations. The war had languished in the hands of its owners ; and as it languished, its price increased. This bantling grew heavy on their hands ; and they would gladly have concealed its pedigree by destroying it at the age of two years and an half.

But why do we dwell on the war ? Why do we call up scenes, which humble our pride and wring our hearts ? The sun of peace has burst through the storm and enlightens and animates our weary land. Like the uncultivated physician, who learns skill from his dead patient, we may learn wisdom from the evils we have suffered. When we have gotten out of the pit, we will *mark it well*, lest we fall in again.

Since we have obtained peace, the grand object is to preserve it ; to preserve it in respect to foreign nations and in respect to ourselves. Let this tender plant be nourished in the heart of our country till its roots shall pervade our land, and the people rest secure under its branches.

One method of preserving peace is, not to *make* war. However paradoxical this proposition may appear to some, it will be found by the best observers and nicest calculators, that war may always be had by *making* it. When one nation declares war against another, it does not remain long to

contend alone. When hostilities have commenced, there is always fuel for the fire, and hands to blow the flame. If we do not make war ourselves, many years will undoubtedly pass before any foreign nation will cross the Atlantic and disturb these remote, these peaceful shores. But at any time if we *declare* war, we can find a nation that will be generous enough to meet us in contest.

To preserve peace it is necessary to use foreign nations with impartiality. It is with nations as it is with individuals; they are apt to be actuated by partialities and antipathies. If we observe the letter of treaties, which are made with foreign powers, and are not guilty of any flagrant violation, we may so order our intercourse that it will give an advantage to one which it does not give to another. To regulate our foreign intercourse in conformity to established stipulations, so as to promote our own national interest, is the first dictate of sound policy. But to order our commercial intercourse by partiality and antipathy, so that it will give a decided preference to one nation, betrays a want of national principle; a want of correct policy; and will, sooner or later, provoke hostilities. "Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury; to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. So likewise a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest, in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification."*

* WASHINGTON'S Legacy.

It is essential to the preservation of national peace to overlook those evils received from other nations, which can not be removed nor remedied. It may be expected, and it will occur, that nations crossing the routs and interests of others on the broad field of the ocean, will sometimes infringe upon national rights. When cases occur which are of a disputeable nature, or with which the general nature of national law will not come in contact, it is good policy to let them pass into oblivion. If every infringement of national rights were a ground of negotiation or war, negotiation and war would be perpetual. At the same time when a violation of national rights is manifest and important, it is essential to the honor and interest of the nation injured to seek redress, and to raise a barrier to prevent future encroachments.

To preserve national peace it is necessary to pay a sacred regard to the rights of other nations. It is no less a duty to observe justice towards nations than towards individuals; and its importance is as much greater as the scale is more extensive. If one nation depredates the men and property of another, or entices away her subjects by the invincible temptation of filthy lucre, or tramples upon her laws and regulations, national patience will resign her office; and a sense of injured rights will urge to the conflict.

Another method to prevent foreign war is to prevent foreign intercourse. If our men and property are not suffered to float on the seas, they will not be taken. If our citizens are not suffered to pass our lines they will not be guilty of invasion. If our spirit of enterprize be checked only for a few years, no nation will find temptation to invade these

coasts to pillage property ; and they will recoil at the thoughts of pillaging men who have lost their souls ; and so we shall be as safe and happy as the inhabitants of the burrow.

But to speak without a figure, it is necessary for the preservation of national peace, to choose men to fill the first offices of the nation, who are not actuated by foreign partiality, or foreign influence ; men, who will not declare war to promote the interest or gratify the ambition of any nation ; men, who know *for what* to fight, *with whom* to fight, *when* to fight, and *how* to fight ; men, who will not link our destinies with those of any other nation, and who have such a degree of penetration that they can calculate with some degree of accuracy what will be the natural result of the war. Such men will not often plunge a nation into hostilities ; and when they do they will not boast of an “ honorable war ” ; nor will they say it was attended with “ brilliant success ”, unless, *by* the war, they had gained, or done *something* toward gaining, their object.

If after we have used just and prudential measures to preserve peace, any foreign power should invade our soil, one spirit will animate every body, and unite all our strength. Armies can then be raised without conscription ; and money can be procured whose credit will not sink *before* it is paid ; and He, who has always prospered us in *defence*, will, undoubtedly, defend us still.

It is as important to avoid civil, as foreign war ; to preserve peace at home as abroad. It is of but little use to witness the return of peace, if we quarrel about it among ourselves. To prevent intestine commotions and preserve domestic tranquillity, it is necessary to adhere to the letter and to the spirit of the national constitution. This system of national policy, formed by the mature wisdom of the nation, is

calculated to unite, protect and happify the whole American people. This is the chart, by which our rulers are to shape their course in respect to their constituents ; and by which they are to establish intercourse with foreign nations. Our citizens are as well acquainted with the constitution as they are with Christianity ; and they are as prompt in trying their rulers by this test as they are in trying their pastors by the bible. If the national authority leaps the bounds of the constitution, the jealous eye of the people will discern the transgression and check the innovation. If a portion of the community assumes claims which are not granted by the constitution, the other members of the Union will counteract the rising evil. The principles of our republican government, like the laws which govern the solar system, unite the body politic ; preserves an equal balance of power, and moves, with equal motion, the nation.

To preserve the principles of our constitution and civil peace, it is of the first importance to perpetuate the *union* of the States. In a widely extended territory there are local jealousies and a difference of interest ; and the same laws will not bear equally upon every part. These are unavoidable evils ; these are evils, which grow out of the imperfection of human nature and human government. But by a spirit of conciliation many of these evils may be removed, and the rest may be mitigated. There are bonds of union more strong than these petty powers of repulsion. As a nation, we are of the same blood ; of the same language ; of similar habits ; of the same religion ; and our *general* interest is the same. In the material world repulsive and attractive powers unite and support the system. So in the body politic these contrariant principles may exist without producing dissolution. If a single administration, like a baleful comet, carries dismay and disaster in its train, during the revolution of four years, it is an unnatural, an unhappy eccentricity ;

but it does not destroy our political system. A constellation of sages may yet be collected from our republican hemisphere, who will shine with more benign aspect, and give hope to a desponding nation.

The confederacy of the States is the cement, the strength of the nation. It is the central point of our political system; a point to which all eyes should be directed; and to whose support every national measure should tend. This is the point of national vitality; the sanctum sanctorum of our republican temple. Because the human body clogs the soul, and because the anxieties of the soul sometimes prey upon the body, shall we separate soul and body? Because the operations of the heavens sometimes destroy the labors of our hands, shall we draw a divisionary line between the firmament and the earth, and prevent all communication? Because there is some difference of interest, some difference of temperature between the southern and northern extremity of our country, shall we cut the vital cord and separate the national soul from its body? Let the band of confederacy be broken, let a divisionary line be drawn through our country, and two distinct governments be established, and we shall have war without importation; and we shall be dictated by any foreign power.

The admission of foreigners into our national government has an unhappy bearing upon republican principles and civil liberty. National pride distinguishes the American character. Every one feels jealous of his rights; and no one is willing to be supplanted by a foreigner. Those who transplant themselves from the old to the new world, are generally men who cannot gratify their ambition at home; or men, who expiated their crimes by a voluntary exile. Neither of these classes are qualified to hold a place in the councils of this nation. Their political sentiments and their habits are not congenial with our republican principles. They can not

feel that enthusiasm, that thirst for national glory which is born in the American bosom. Why should we give preference to foreigners? Why should we promote them to places of honor, confidence and emolument? Does not as good blood flow in American as in any veins? Does not genius grow as luxuriantly on new as on old soil? Does not the American sun invigorate and mature the mind as much as an European sun? Why then should we import exotics to fill those distinguished places, which we can fill with those of native birth and culture?

A general diffusion of knowledge has a tendency to preserve republican principles and to protract national peace. If people can read and understand what they read, they become acquainted not only with the condition of their own country and the transactions of their own government, but they learn the present state of the world; the comparative merits of different governments and the causes of the revolutions of nations and kingdoms. With this information, people will be cautious whom they choose to hold the reins of government. They will scrutinize the official conduct of their rulers; and they will guard against those causes, which have destroyed other nations. They will distinguish between the freedom and the licentiousness of the press; between truth and falsehood. In a nation, composed of such men, the lying types of a newspaper might perish for want of patronage. If we would leave to our children the blessings of a free government and the blessings of peace, we must prepare their minds by culture to understand and enjoy these blessings. Let the mind be darkened, be shackled with ignorance, and it is not difficult to enslave the body.

Every prescription, which can be devised, every remedy which can be applied will be inadequate to support the spirit

of our constitution and perpetuate our national peace without the aid of religion. The most correct principles of the best human institutions and the strongest ligaments of society will be brushed away by the first popular breeze, if a sense of moral obligation is effaced from the mind ; and the principles of right and wrong are not considered sanctioned by divine authority. The fundamental principles of our constitution are consonant with the laws of nature ; and if the latter are not esteemed sacred, the former will be violated without scruple. Our national rulers are the guardians of our political system. If they be destitute of christian principle, political principles will not be very sacred in their estimation. Capricious foreign attachments or antipathies may lead them from the spirit of their own government, and compel them to involve the nation in the calamities of war.

Our national authority originates from the great mass of the people ; and it possesses the features and characteristics of the body which gave it birth. If the people, the source of authority, is corrupt, the authority is also corrupt. An unwise, unrighteous people choose unwise, unrighteous men to order the destinies of the nation. The old proverb, with a little alteration, is pertinent : like people, like rulers. Let the salt of religion be infused into the corrupt mass of the people ; let the fountain of national power be purified, and its stream and its channel will also be pure and resuscitate our land.

We hail thee, sacred peace, celestial dove ! Whoever compelled thee to fly from thy native land, whoever remanded thee back again, we welcome thy return to the bosom of our country. Perch on the standard of our nation ; hover over the ashes of our capitol. Should the windows of incensed Heaven again be opened and deluge our land with war,

and thou, sacred dove, be compelled to flee to find rest for thy foot, remember the ark of America ; O remember this thy last retreat. Fly on the pinions of the wind ; visit every clime and every nation. Bear on thy golden wings the gospel of *peace*, and thine shall be the kingdom.



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